



## OFFICES

### **COOKEVILLE**

931-520-0608

VOICE

931-520-0905

FAX

### **COVINGTON**

901-475-2541

VOICE

901-475-2545

FAX

### **ERIN**

931-289-5640

VOICE

931-289-5644

FAX

### **KNOXVILLE**

865-594-6696

VOICE

865-594-6780

FAX

### **LEWISBURG**

931-270-9183

VOICE

931-270-9280

FAX

### **MADISON**

615-860-0912

VOICE

615-860-8703

FAX

### **MILAN**

731-686-3371

VOICE

731-686-0975

FAX

### **SELMER**

731-645-6731

VOICE

731-645-3557

FAX

### **TULLAHOMA**

931-454-1968

VOICE

931-454-1971

FAX

# Housing Choice Voucher

# Owner Newsletter

WINTER 2006 / 2007

## Reporting Tenant-Caused Damages

THDA has adopted a new policy regarding tenant-caused damages. As you may know, when a Section 8 participant family or guest has caused significant damages to a unit, the family may lose their rental assistance. In the past, THDA staff have determined which repair costs were reasonable and what tenants should be required to pay landlords for damages. This process was burdensome for THDA staff members, tenants and landlords.

In an effort to simplify the process and ensure the fairness of decisions regarding damages, THDA now requires landlords to provide a court judgment against the tenant to determine repayment

amounts for damages. Once a court judgment is issued, the tenant will be required to repay the amount listed or face losing the rental assistance.

If one of your THDA Section 8 tenants causes damages to a unit, please call the THDA field office within three days. A staff member will document your report of damages. Families who cause severe damage or repeatedly damage units may be terminated from the Section 8 program. When you have secured a court judgment against a tenant, please contact the appropriate field office within 15 days of the issuance of the judgment.

Many counties in Tennessee are covered by the Uniform

Residential Landlord and Tenant Act. Under this law, landlords are required to provide tenants with an itemized list of damages and costs. Landlords must also offer tenants the opportunity to walk through the unit to see the damages claimed. THDA encourages all landlords to adhere to this law regardless of whether their properties are located in a county covered by the law or not. For instructions on viewing the law, please see this website: [www.state.tn.us/consumer/law-Instr.html#tennessee landlordtenantact](http://www.state.tn.us/consumer/law-Instr.html#tennessee landlordtenantact).

Thank you for your cooperation with this new policy.

## THDA's Website—A Wealth of Information

You can find answers to many of your questions about the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and other THDA programs on our website at [www.tennessee.gov/thda](http://www.tennessee.gov/thda).

Select the Section 8 Rental Assistance link on the left of the main page of the site. On the Rental Assistance page, you will find field office contact information, waiting list information, landlord booklet, applicant booklet and other valuable information. All of

the materials are updated on a regular basis. Future editions of the Owner Newsletter will be on the website, too.

We invite you to look at the rest of the website to learn about other THDA programs.



**Owners hold the key to the success of THDA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. The quality housing you provide makes a difference in the lives of families.**

**Please wait until the 15th of the month to call about a missing HAP check.**

**THDA Central Office**  
404 James Robertson Pkwy,  
Suite 1114  
Nashville, TN 37243-0900  
615-741-4980 voice  
615-741-4933 fax

# Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Congress made changes to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to protect victims of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking effective January 5, 2006. These changes affect all persons assisted under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. All owners, landlords and property managers participating in the Section 8 HCV program must comply with the new law. You are advised to consult

with an attorney about your rights, duties and obligations in relation to this law.

The new law states that an individual's status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking is not an appropriate basis for denial of admission or denial of housing assistance, and an individual is protected as soon as one act of domestic abuse occurs. VAWA explicitly provides that a landlord "may bifur-

cate a lease" to evict or remove the offender from the lease while allowing the victim to remain. VAWA does allow landlords to evict a victim for unrelated criminal activity as long as that tenant is not held to a higher standard than other tenants.

For more information, please see [www.usdoj.gov/ovw/regulations.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/regulations.htm).

# Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)

If you have any questions about your Housing Assistance Payment, please contact the appropriate field office first. If you have not received your payment at the beginning of the month, please wait until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before contacting the field office. At that time, THDA will be able to track the payment and respond as needed.

When a tenant first leases up, there may be a delay in receiving the first payment. After that, you should receive payments by the first of the month.

The amount of HAP will change as the tenant's income and family composition change. You will receive notification by mail of any changes to the HAP.

If you ever have a change of address, please notify your field office as soon as possible. Checks will not be forwarded and will be returned to THDA if they are undeliverable.

THDA prides itself on making timely and accurate payments. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

# Section 8 HCV Family Obligations

THDA requires that all Section 8 participants sign a form acknowledging their understanding of all family obligations under the Housing Choice Voucher program. Tenant responsibilities include adhering to terms of the lease, paying

rent on time and not causing significant unit damage.

We need your help to ensure that tenants are held accountable for their actions. Please stay in touch with the appropriate THDA field office. Let a staff

member know within one month of the occurrence when a tenant fails to pay rent on time or conform to the terms of a lease. Tenants may lose their rental assistance for any violation of the family obligations.